

# MOTORING

BY HOWARD S. FISK.

FROM all reports, the American motor trucks are revealing their superiority over the army mule in the present campaign of the United States Army in Mexico in the hunt for Francisco Villa. While the several branches of the army are engaged in combating the deserts and mountains of northern Mexico, motor trucks are daily engaged in hauling supplies and maintaining a line of communication between the permanent base at Columbus and the field units just south of Casas Grandes, Mexico. From the very start of the campaign across the border motor trucks have been in service, hauling soldiers and supplies from day to day. This has been necessary because of the lack of railway facilities, due to the failure of the Mexican government, which owns all of the railways, to grant permission for their use by the American authorities.

As a result Gen. Pershing has had to rely strictly on motor trucks for transporting the supplies to the thousands of United States cavalrymen, infantrymen and artillerymen. In fact, this is the first time that motor trucks have been used in American war service. The motor truck and the army mule have been pitted against each other for the first time under the most trying conditions to be encountered in military service. Among those who are observing the present campaign, it is said, it is practically the last stand of the army mule.

There is at the present time engaged in this field work several motor truck units, each consisting of twenty-seven trucks, all in charge of a truckmaster, having three assistants: twenty-eight drivers, one mechanic, one mechanic's helper and one machinist. The first week of actual service is asserted, revealed the superiority of trucks over mules not only in the greater speed and running radius of the trucks, but in the reduction of labor, hauling units, forage requirements and cost of operation. One of the first motor truck units to reach the front was the Motor Truck Company, No. 1, composed of twenty-eight Whites. This unit was closely followed by a number of other truck units, all of which are in active service at the present time.

## Rush Rations to Front.

In less than six days after the War Department in this city issued the order for organizing motor truck units the first detail had reached the field base at Casas Grandes with about 200 tons of rations. As soon as the chasses for the six units arrived from various parts of the country, a force of army carpenters and mechanics fitted the trucks with field wagon and cavalry wagon bodies, which had been shipped from the quartermaster's depot at Jeffersonville.

The field wagon bodies arrived at Columbus in knock-down form, while the cavalry bodies were transferred direct from cavalry wagons to trucks without need of alteration of any kind. A large number of bodies were mounted each day until the final truck was equipped. At soon as the first twelve trucks were provided with bodies they were sent across the border to begin the one-hundred-and-thirty-mile run through the desert sands and rough mountain trails to Casas Grandes. Each truck carried out soldiers. The first division delivered its load at the field base and returned to Columbus three days. Mule teams averaged less than two miles an hour. Occasionally, between the dispatching of truck transports, a few old-style army field wagons were sent across the border, carrying no greater load than the trucks, but drawn by four mules. The second division, consisting of seven trucks, started from headquarters at dusk, the same day the first division started, carrying a load of supplies for the aviation corps at the front. This load consisted of rations, gasoline, oil, tents, spare parts for aeroplanes, knock-down hangars and other equipment.

By starting out late in the afternoon on a day when apprehension was felt for the safety of the military aviation, this division attracted considerable attention at Columbus. Even the hour of setting out across the desert suggested the urgency of the trip. The third detail consisted of five trucks, which left Columbus the next day at noon, carrying twenty huge drums of gasoline and oil. The immense quantities of gasoline required by the various fleets of army aeroplanes, dispatch cars, motor cycles, etc., presented a difficulty almost as great as the difficulty of getting an ample supply of water for the troops in the field.

Many of the rivers, wells and water holes along the route of the army transport service are insubstantial, making it necessary to transport practically all of the water used for drinking. For this purpose the War Department placed a rush order for three tank trucks of 600 gallons capacity each, all of which are now in service. For seventy-five miles south of Columbus the route passes through only two villages, and these have been deserted. The only opportunity to replenish a water supply is offered by the roadside camps and kitchens which have been established along the

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## FEDERAL AID TO ROADS NOW SEEMS CERTAIN

Maintenance Problems Are Given Positive Attention by Senate Committee.

Maintenance has been given positive attention in the form of federal aid in roads to the several states which the Senate committee on post offices and post roads has embraced in its proposed legislation. This subject the Automobile Association of America, national good roads board has insistently presented ever since the coming of the vehicle which caused road travel

effort and rely upon the central source entirely, the committee says: "While the contribution on the part of the federal government should be substantial, so that results of some magnitude might be accomplished, such contribution should impose upon the states the duty of contributing in at least as large a measure, so that there may be no insidious paternalism established, which would stifle local initiative and self-help. If the federal government were to enter upon the building outright of a system of national highways, the temptation would be great on the part of states and their subdivisions to cease or curtail their own work of improvement in the hope that the federal government would ultimately come and make the improvements for them. Furthermore, the imposing upon the states of the duty of making substantial contribution will serve to automatically modify the demands upon the federal Treasury, as excessive demands upon the federal Treasury under these conditions would at the same time entail equally excessive demands upon the states." The American Association of State Highway Officials and the American

## TAKE HAND IN GASOLINE WAR

**Automobile Manufacturers Decide to Embark in Oil Business.**  
The automobile manufacturers of America have reached a decision to take a hand in the gasoline situation and embark in the oil business and make gasoline for themselves and their customers. It is announced by Mr. Royall that a new company is well under way, and that the charter will probably be issued within the next few days. Its purpose will be to produce gasoline, kerosene, lubricating oil and other products of petroleum, not necessarily for the purpose of injuring any business at present in operation, but to demonstrate that gasoline can be produced and sold at a profit at a price somewhat lower than that now prevailing and within the means of all users of automobiles and motor boats.

**Driving Paige Cars.**  
Among those who purchased 1916 Paige cars during the past week were J. W. Hanna, 6-16, seven-passenger touring car, and Dr. J. Albert Potter a roadster.

**Will Sell Studebakers.**  
Joseph H. Pilling, for several years past engaged in the automobile business in this city, has joined the sales staff of the Commercial Auto and Supply Company and will devote his time to selling Studebaker cars.

## NOW IS THE TIME

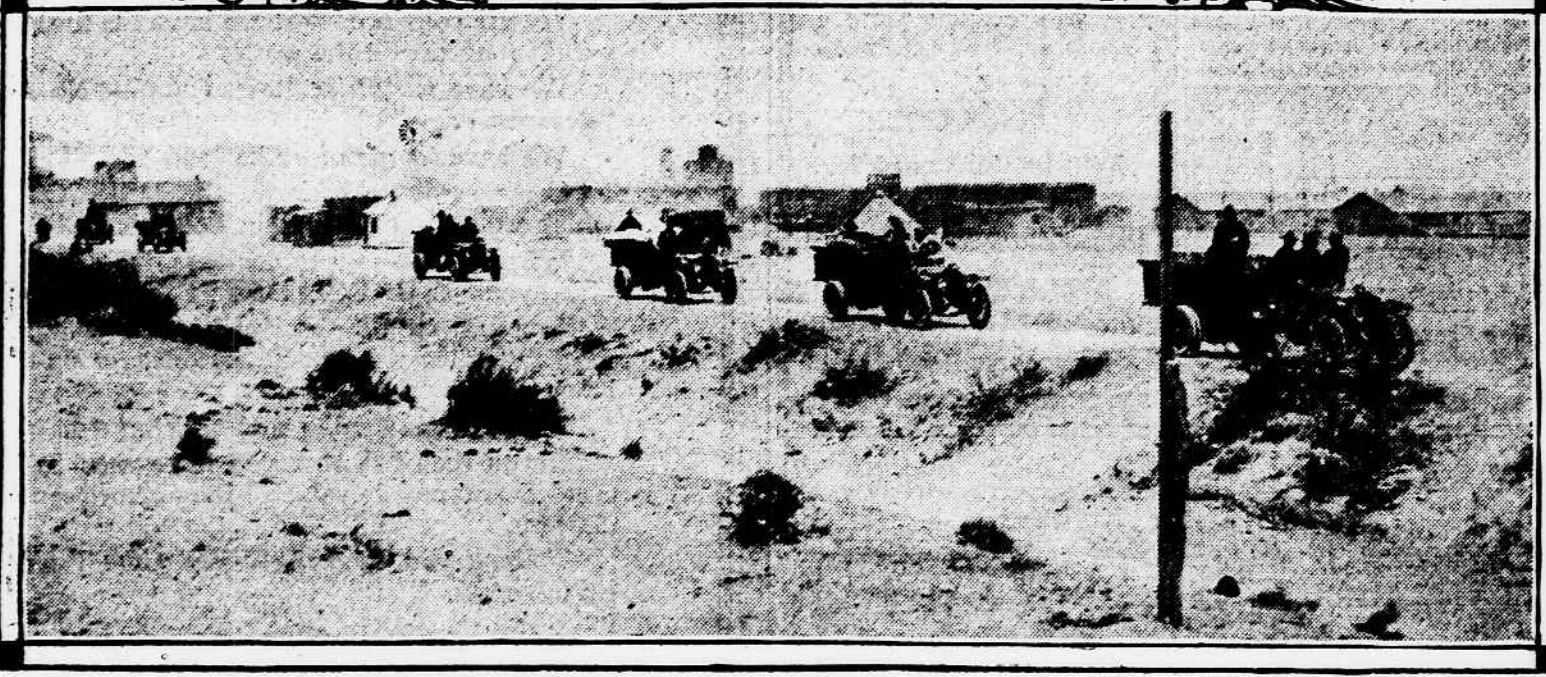
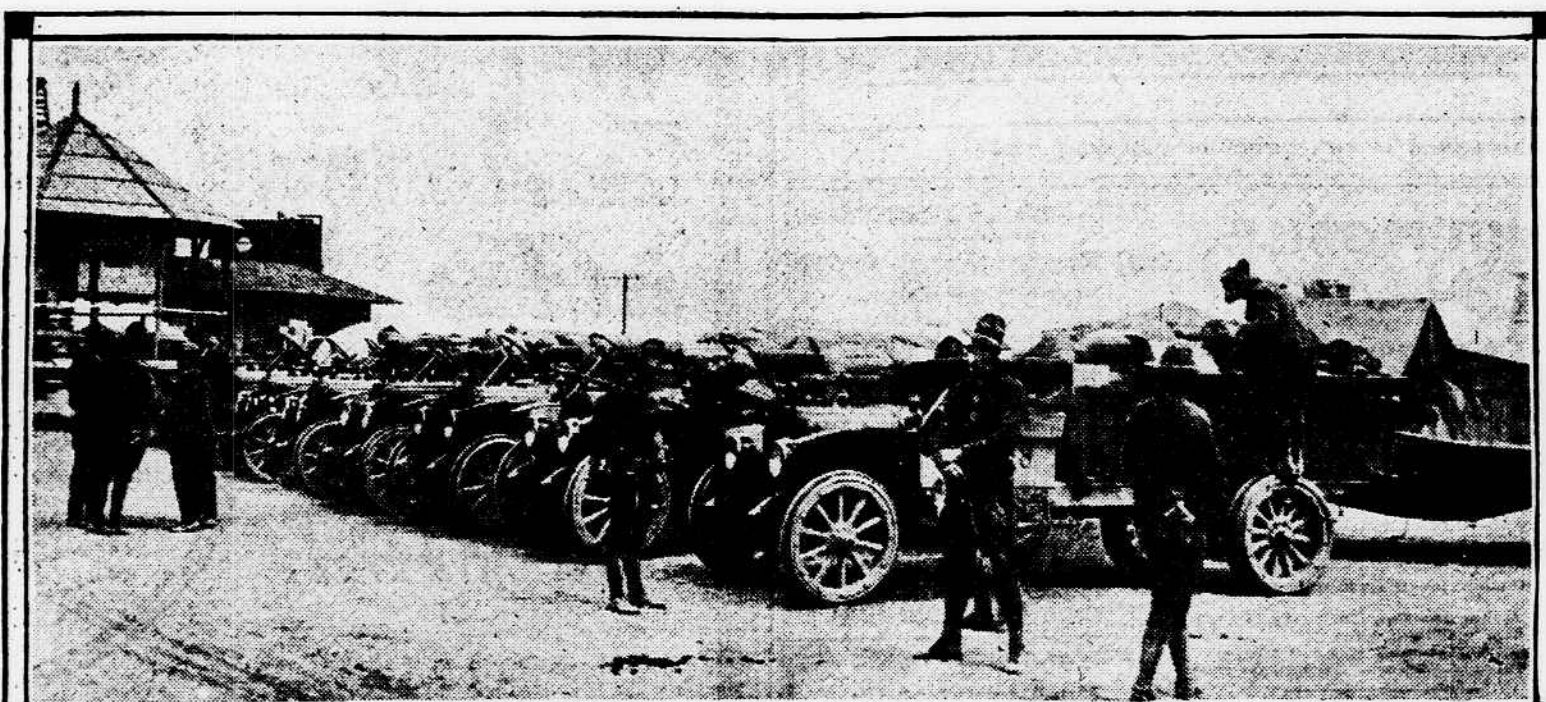
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## UNITED STATES ARMY MOTOR TRUCKS IN SERVICE IN MEXICO.



raised by the gentlest breeze, sweep across the deserts and plateaus of Chihuahua, enveloping the trucks and lodging stand in the truck cabs, as well as the eyes and throats of the drivers. Eddies of sand strike the face with stinging force and add to the suffering from sun and wind. In some of the narrow passes through which the trucks must travel, a few grains of sand in a carburetor might easily tie up a whole convoy, inasmuch as there would be no opportunity for one truck to pass another.

In addition to hauling supplies, the motor truck is performing an equally important work for the Signal Corps. Communication between Columbus and the advance column in Mexico is maintained by motor trucks equipped with radio sets. Situated on the same knoll, it is said, where Villa's men mounted a machine gun and swept Columbus with its fire on the night of the raid, the Signal Corps has stationed a ton and half White truck, whose engine drives a generator supplying electricity for portable wireless outfit. This plan is regularly in communication with another wireless truck further south in Mexico.

This wireless outfit represents a distinct advance in the construction of portable wireless sets for military work. It can be set up for use in twelve minutes and send messages within a radius of 800 miles under favorable conditions. Messages have been received from points as far away as 2,500 miles. Under the worst conditions the sending radius is limited to 200 miles, but under good conditions existing in the early hours of the morning, when there is less electrical disturbance, it is possible to send messages as far as 800 miles.

This same type of vehicle was used some time ago to report the accuracy of mountain artillery fire at Tobyhanna, Pa., where the guns were set up on one side of a mountain and fired at targets on the other side. When tested in this city, the outfit received messages from Boston, Key West, Porto Rico and ships at sea. On one occasion it picked up a conversation between the big government station at Arlington and the Honolulu station in the Pacific ocean.

**Motor Vehicles in Mexico.**  
"When business again opens up in Mexico," says Vice Consul William F. Blocker, at Piedras Negras, "it is expected that an important demand for automobiles and motor trucks and delivery cars of American manufacture will be manifested. The trade in tires and accessories has already reached considerable volume and is said to be greatly increasing."

"It is practically four years since Mexico was eliminated as a market for motor vehicles. At that time every automobile manufacturer of the United States was represented in the various cities and large stocks of tires and accessories were piled up. The trend of the demand was toward the higher-priced French cars, and in the City of Mexico there were to be seen more automobiles of French than of American manufacture, consequently a large proportion of the tires and accessories came from Europe."

"While there has been some replenishing of automobile stock during the last few years, Mexico is still a virgin field for this class of trade. Most of the cars that have been shipped recently through Piedras Negras and other border towns were for military use and to replace the old, worn-out vehicles that saw hard service during the revolutionary period."

"The demand is now beginning to extend to private users. In this connection it may be well to mention that the prevailing idea in the United States seems to be that the people of Mexico have exhausted or lost all their money. This is an erroneous idea. While it is true that many have had their fortunes badly depleted, there is still much actual cash in the country,

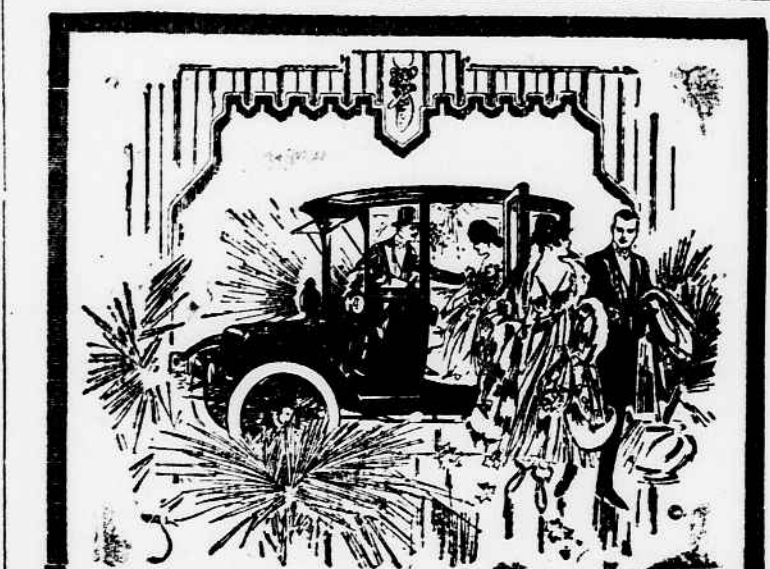
to extend beyond town and county and even state lines.

Thus comments the Senate committee in the memorandum which accompanies the bill recently reported unanimously: "While the primary purpose of the government in entering upon the policy of federal aid is to secure the construction of systems of highways which are urgently needed, it should not forego the opportunity and the duty to require on the part of the states that they adequately maintain every mile of road constructed with the aid of federal money. If legislation is framed so as to bring about such continuous and efficient maintenance, a great benefit to the people will have been assured, as it is now generally recognized that because of lax administration and mistaken economy millions of dollars' worth of well constructed roads are disintegrating under the destructive action of heavy traffic. The federal government should not expend its revenues for maintenance, as by so doing it would not add to the stock of good roads, but it can make conditions which will bring about the desired results and leave the federal revenues free for the great task of co-operating in the building of improved roads."

**Contributions From State.**  
In answer to the charge that federal help would cause the states to lessen

Automobile Association, in co-operation with other organizations, are using their best endeavors to convince the senators from the several states that the good roads bill demands consideration equal to that given to military preparedness.

**Ford Cars**  
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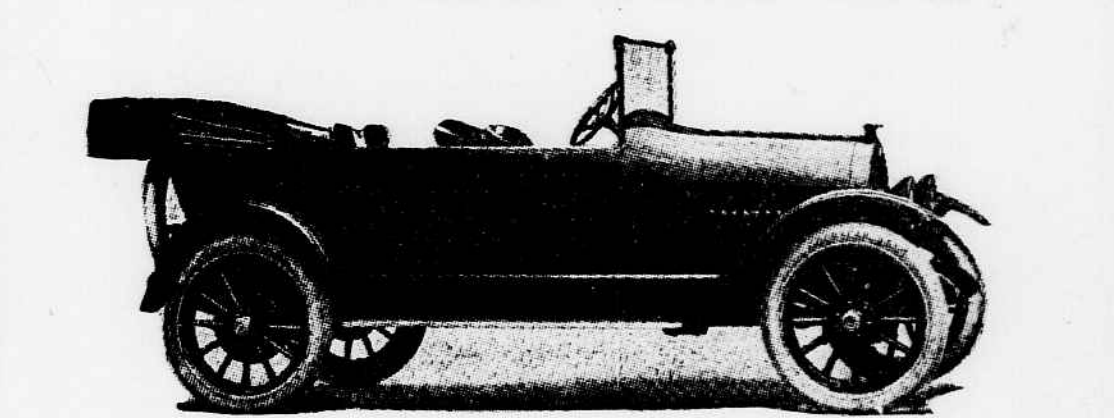
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